



## ***An Evidence-Based Prevention Program to Help Youth Who May Be Depressed or Suicidal***

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>WHAT IS THE PROBLEM</b></p>	<p>Suicide is the second leading cause of death for American teenagers and many adolescents suffer in silence. Those who reach out for help tend to confide in their friends and peers, who are often unequipped to intervene. By teaching middle and high school students to recognize the warning signs of depression and suicide, we are building their capacity for empathy, social responsibility, and social activism, leading to safer schools and communities, and providing them with vital knowledge they can use for the rest of their lives.</p> <p>Suicide is preventable; everyone has a role in saving lives. Youths have a tremendous amount of influence in each other's lives, and we can leverage power that by teaching students the warning signs of depression and suicide. In doing so, youths are empowered to ACT, building safer schools and communities.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>WHAT IS THE PROGRAM</b></p>	<p>At its core, the SOS Signs of Suicide Prevention Program (SOS Program) relies on three easy-to-remember steps, denoted by the acronym ACT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Acknowledge</b> that you are seeing warning signs and that it is serious</li> <li>• <b>Care</b> let your friend know how much you care about them</li> <li>• <b>Tell</b> a trusted adult that you are worried about your friend</li> </ul> <p>The SOS program uses an educational curriculum to teach students to recognize the symptoms of depression and suicide, and can be implemented by existing school personnel within one class period. The main teaching tool is a video that shows dramatizations and real life stories of hope about the right and wrong ways to react when a friend exhibits certain behaviors. The program includes a mental health self-assessment that screens every student for depression and suicide. The program also includes training and educational materials for faculty, staff and parents.</p> <p>An enlightened student body means earlier detection and increased help-seeking behavior. Research has shown that the SOS Program, which is listed on SAMHSA's National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices, improves students' knowledge and adaptive attitudes about suicide risk and depression, and reduces actual suicide attempts by 40%-64% in randomized controlled studies (Aseltine et al., 2007 &amp; Schilling et al., 2016).</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE</b></p>	<p>The SOS Program is designed for all middle and high school students. Additionally, school faculty and staff, parents, and community members receive training as trusted adults who have a critical role in reducing stigma, promoting help-seeking and responding to youth in need.</p>

<p><b>WHO WILL BENEFIT</b></p>	<p>Evidence-based suicide prevention programming benefits the entire community. Students and school staff learn critical and potentially life-saving skills, parents are encouraged to advocate for their children’s health, and the community becomes more resilient overall.</p>
<p><b>TRAINING CORE LEARNING</b></p>	<p>Students learn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age-appropriate, fact-based information about suicide and the associated mental health concerns of depression, substance use, and self-injury</li> <li>• Messages of hope that encourage help-seeking because mental illness, like physical illness, requires treatment</li> <li>• Clear steps to take when worried about themselves or a friend (ACT: Acknowledge, Care, Tell)</li> </ul> <p>Schools receive guidance on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Best practices in suicide prevention including universal student education and depression screening</li> <li>• Training for faculty and staff on warning signs, risk factors, and how to support a student in need</li> <li>• Strategies and tools for engaging parents in suicide prevention in-person and online</li> </ul>
<p><b>HOW TO GET STARTED AND COST</b></p>	<p>Contact <a href="mailto:programs@sandyhookpromise.org">programs@sandyhookpromise.org</a></p> <p>Sandy Hook Promise will work with individuals, schools and community-based organizations to offset 100% of the training cost in order to reach and impact as many lives as possible.</p>